

THREAT TO OUR HERITAGE

No. 5

August 1979

RECENT DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN COVENTRY COUNCILLORS AND BUSINESSMEN IN CHAPELFIELDS ON PRESERVING THE CHARACTER OF THE CONSERVATION AREA HAVE SPARKED OFF RENEWED INTEREST IN THE DISTRICT.

For many years residents of Chapelfields have had to live with the threat of demolition, a threat which was finally removed in 1976 with the declaration of the district as a Conservation Area. This is a declaration of intent to retain the character of the area by controlled planning and development.

As a declaration of intent, the Conservation Area is well-merited, for Chapelfields is an attractive area with considerable character which deserves to be maintained. In reality, it is an outstanding example of too little, too late.

DEMOLISHED

By 1976, when the Conservation Area was declared, many of the original properties had already been demolished and replaced by buildings which are completely out of character with the area, extreme examples being the Shell garage on the corner of Mount Street



Photos by Les Hill

This is what the Conservation Area is all about (top shop in Craven Street).....



.....this isn't! (Shell garage, corner of Mount Street).



and the new houses in Duke Street. Moreover, many of the houses which had already been modernised were altered in ways quite out of keeping with their original appearance, and the appearance of the houses around them.

Unlike a General Improvement Area or a Housing Action Area, the Conservation Area does not compel the improvement of property, nor does it involve the provision of better environmental or community facilities, and no extra money is available to either the Council or to private individuals except the normal improvement grants. Consequently, while individual residents have continued to improve their property, there has been no attempt to improve the area as a whole. Several buildings are in a poor condition - some remaining empty for long periods - and there are a number of derelict sites, notably behind the Shell garage in Mount Street and alongside the church hall in Craven Street.

CONFLICTS

The situation is complicated by differing attitudes between Council departments. Improving old houses and retaining their original character must involve some compromise with modern standards of design and building, but this does not seem to be taken into account by the relevant departments. In order to obtain an improvement grant, for example, residents are asked to remove the original winding staircases, usually also involving the destruction of the original large workshop windows. Building Inspectors have also given advice which conflicts with that given by the Architects. Architects wishing to conserve the area advise the use of slate or asbestos tiles and the retention of the red brick walls, while Building Inspectors encourage the use of concrete tiles and rendering. Clearly

(continued on page 7)

Community Association News

NEIGHBOURHOOD CARE SCHEME

Helping each other - that's what this Scheme is about. And it's not only younger people helping the elderly. Older people can help younger ones in just as many ways with baby minding, advice or just plain friendship.

In Westwood Road and Kensington Road special efforts are being made to let residents know who is available to offer specific help - shopping, mending fuses or whatever. A few of the neighbours have started to meet regularly to see what they can do. Information leaflets are being dropped in people's doors. A handful of people in each street will act as key workers through whom offers of help and requests for assistance will be channelled. Some who can offer help and some who need it are beginning to get together.

If this Scheme is successful it will reduce the heavy reliance on doctors and social workers to do the things anyone can do. It's an attempt to ensure that someone alone or housebound, whether by a sick child, or being elderly or handicapped, actually sees someone other than these professionals; someone who isn't afraid to be a 'good neighbour'.

The Community Association is committed to providing general support and a chairperson for bi-monthly meetings with the key workers, at which Social Services and other interested parties may wish to be present. Anyone

interested in learning more about how this Scheme works is welcome to a meeting on 27th September at Social Services in Albany Road (corner of Kensington Road) at 7.30 pm.

PRAM RACE ?

Following the letter from Jim King in July's E.C.H.O., the Steering Committee discussed the idea of having a sponsored pram race and related events this autumn. If you or your organisation would be interested in taking part in a sort of Community Fair, please contact the Community Association c/o 24 Avondale Road.

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CHAPELFIELDS CHERRY: discovers the library

Story: Glib
Art: Lee

ONE DAY



NOW: HOW CAN I FIND OUT THE ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS? PERHAPS I'LL GO AND SEE AUNT MARY

I KNOW! MY FRIEND JANE SAID THE LIBRARY HAD LOTS OF INFORMATION ON ALL SORTS OF THINGS



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8pm-4.30pm

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OF COURSE! COME ON IN.

LOOKS A BIT SCARY ARE CHILDREN ALLOWED IN?

WELL... I'VE FOUND OUT ALL I WANTED TO KNOW. I'LL COME AGAIN NOW.

LATER

HERE ARE ALL THE ANSWERS TO MY QUESTIONS



OH! - IT'S REALLY NICE HERE. AND EVERYONE'S SO FRIENDLY. THEY EVEN HAVE A STORYTIME FOR CHILDREN ON SATURDAY.



'ullo 'ullo 'ullo

After a reader had expressed concern about the number of police on the beat in Earlsdon, we decided to do some research on policing in our circulation area. One of our Committee went to Fletchamstead Police Station to meet Superintendent Edwards, the 'Permanent Beat Officers' (P.B.O.s) covering Earlsdon, Hearsall and Chapelfields, and their immediate boss Inspector Norman Farndon.

There are three P.B.O.s covering different sections of our area, and they are backed up by Panda and Zulu cars. Panda Cars (usually Allegros) patrol two or more P.B.O. areas; they usually go to incidents where a P.B.O. is unable to do so. The Zulu or First Response Cars (usually Marinas) may be called in an emergency (e.g. a break-in or a road traffic accident) but spend most of their time on traffic patrol.

Both Inspector Farndon and Superintendent Edwards believe that P.B.O.s are in the front line of police work, and represent the most important section of the Force. They are seen to be around and, by creating a definite police presence, help to prevent crime. The P.B.O.s themselves feel that they can see and hear more on the beat than from a Panda, and are therefore far more likely to notice any crime or disturbances.

In addition, the P.B.O.s are in a position to involve themselves in the Community, to

offer advice on crime prevention and to carry out quite a lot of 'social work' - for example P.C. John Goldie has spent a great deal of time helping with Broadway Youth Club. One of the P.B.O.s said that it is easy to take someone to court, but often that does not solve the problem of their behaviour. He feels that the Community role of the P.B.O. is most important in reducing crime on his beat.

Vandalism is seen by the P.B.O.s as the main problem in the area. They think that residents could do more to report any acts of vandalism or suspicious goings-on they may witness: any such calls will be treated confidentially. Also, since it is holiday time, they stressed the importance of 'good neighbours' keeping an eye on vacated property and again reporting anything suspicious.

Of course, the Force is under-staffed, but within the staff resources available there are as many officers on the beat as possible. To help with this problem, particularly at weekends, the P.B.O.s are supplemented by voluntary Special Constables. The Police Force is always short of Special Constables.

So, if you fancy being a part-time cop and doing something positive for your community, why not contact Fletchamstead Police Station or have a chat with one of the P.B.O.s

Lastly, don't forget that 999 calls are for emergencies - otherwise ring Coventry 72211.



Dear Echo...

your letters page.

Scouts

In August 1909 a group of boys got together and formed a troop electing Mr. Sharratt as their leader. They had to close during the First World War, but restarted as soon as Mr. Sharratt returned from the Services. The group was then called the Earlsdon Westleyan Scouts.

Records from then until 1942 have been lost, except that the group was registered in London in 1929. During the last war the Scouts were awarded the Silver Cross for their help in taking messages across Coventry during raids. In August 1942, the group changed to Air Scouts.

The group has had many Camps and Exhibitions and the lads have gone from strength to strength, but as we enter August there is another change coming. We are very short of boys and leaders. Here is a group with a lot of history. Come and join us.

Contact Mr. L.H. Gallard if you are over eleven or have Scouting knowledge and wish to help the youth.

L.H. Gallard,
Group Scout Leader,
15 Highland Road,
Earlsdon.

Walls

Enjoying a read of your July issue No. 4 of E.C.H.O., I noted that you have referred to my department potential enquiries concerning loans as well as improvement grants.

Whilst my reception office does have leaflets on loans, responsibility for loans rests with the Director of Homes and Property Services and it would perhaps avoid me having to refer callers to the Housing Advice Centre in New Union Street if you could include in a future publication information to the effect that detailed advice on loans is available at the Housing Advice Centre.

D.H. Evans,
Director of Environmental
Health Services,
Coventry City Council.

We welcome your letters. Here is a chance to air your views on local matters. Please address your correspondence to:
ECHO Editorial Committee,
c/o Earlsdon Library,
Earlsdon Avenue North.

Sports

Are you interested in forming a local sports group e.g. Tennis, Badminton, Weight Training, Basketball, Gymnastics? Why not contact your local college? We may have facilities, equipment and time available if enough people are interested.

Make use of your local college.

Contact: Mrs. E. Galsworthy,
Coventry Technical College.
Tel: Cov. 57221 Ext. 222

Please note that it is the policy of the Editorial Committee to withhold names and addresses of correspondents only if there appears to be sufficient justification.

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OPINION

BROADWAY SCHOOL

The Future in Our Hands

Local residents could look forward to better leisure, sports and health facilities for all ages if the future of Broadway School were to be discussed now.

The danger is that the Education Department will decide, without reference to any of us, what will happen to the school.

The current position is that, since Broadway closed as a primary school, it has been used as an annexe of Coventry Technical College whilst a new building is being put up at the Butts. It is not yet clear how long the College will need Broadway, but it will be at least a year, possibly two, before they move out. Meanwhile, at the discretion of Mr. Arculus, Principal of the Tech., permission was given for the use one evening a week for the youth club to meet there. The youth club now has 270 members, and the success of this venture alone has shown what can be done. And if a youth club can meet there once a week, why not use it on other evenings and at weekends?

However the important question remains; what will happen to Broadway once the Technical College withdraws? The Community Association has already made some suggestions on the basis of what people have said.

If the building were to be handed over for community use, it could be used to provide many of the facilities missing or inadequate at present. Facilities like a day nursery, a club for handicapped people, a health centre, an information and advice service, clubs for all age groups and to cover all interests, meeting rooms for different groups.

There are at present two main things preventing this happening. The first is the narrow-minded view of Coventry City Council and the Education Department. The second is the widespread reluctance of most people to challenge decisions made by the authorities, although as Broadway Youth Club has shown, this can be done, and done very successfully.

The issue of the future of Broadway School is wide open at present, but it will only remain that way if we take some action soon to see that our opinions are heard. We know there is energy, enthusiasm and interest; now there has to be action.



Photo by Les Hill

E.C.H.O. SNIPPETS

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contact: Mrs. F.S. Cotton
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STUDENT ACCOMMODATION
Why not contact me or even advertise any
suitable bedsit/self-catering accommodation
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Coventry Technical College.
contact: Mrs. Galsworthy Cov. 57221 Ex.222
at the College after 28th August

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Pop your Snippets
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Earlsdon Library.

E.C.H.O. Diary of Events

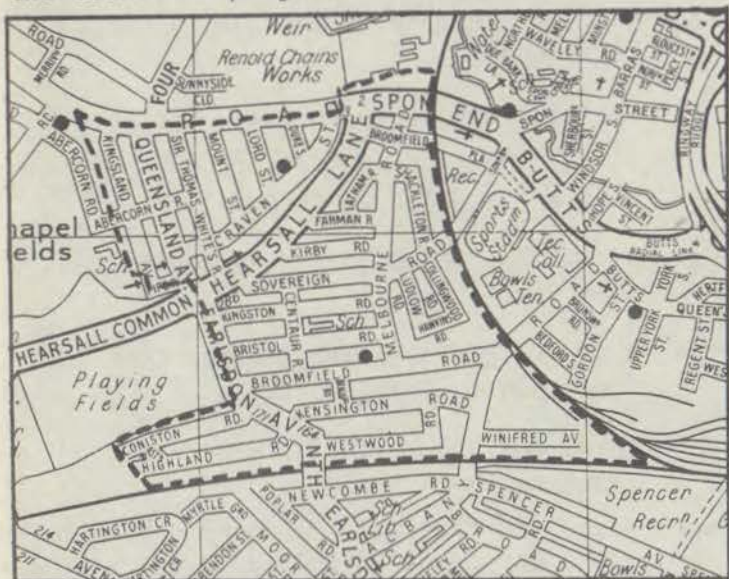
- Broadway Playscheme Broadway School 1.00 - 4.00 pm August 6th, 7th, 9th, 13th, 14th, 16th, 20th, 21st, 23rd
- Broadway Youth Club Broadway School Continuing as normal until August 24th Then look out for notices in library and shop windows
- August 11th 3.00 pm Garden Party 1 Bates Road (if wet, at St. Barbara's Church Hall)
Proceeds to International Year of the Child Landrover Project
- 16th 2.30 pm Chapelfields Townswomens Guild Talk on 'Old Coventry' Hearsall Baptist Church Hall
- 20th - September 1st Earlsdon Library Holiday activities for children Details from the Library
- 20th 7.30 pm Starley Housing Co-operative presents an evening of films about Housing Co-operatives Henry Fry Centre, Butts roundabout Admission free
- 21st 7.45 pm Hearsall W.I. Corn Dollies and Bring and Buy Sale Common Room St. Mary Magdalen's Church
- September 1st - 8th Criterion Theatre 'Bed Before Yesterday' Ben Travers farce Bookings - telephone 75175 (evenings) or 75013 (daytime)

Our G.I.A.

At the Council's Housing Committee meeting on 12th July, Councillor Len Hilton presented the petition of 878 signatures calling for the immediate declaration of the area shown in the map below as a General Improvement Area.

Ken Lomas, Director of Homes and Property Services, explained that Coventry has an Urban Renewal Programme which currently includes parts of the area in question scheduled for declaration in 1980/81 and 1982/83. He pointed out that for Earlsdon to "jump the gun" would mean that other areas may have to wait even longer. The new government cut-backs could also seriously affect the Programme.

So despite the welcome given to a local initiative, the Committee agreed that the declaration of this area as a G.I.A. must be considered in the context of the annual review of the Council's programme of housing expenditure.



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ORDERS
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FOR
CHRISTMAS

Published by E.C.H.O.

THREAT TO OUR HERITAGE (cont'd from page 1)

a wide gulf exists between the Architects Department, who initiated the Conservation Area and the Environmental Health Department, which actually controls the money for improvements. The problems of both improving the houses and retaining their original character is one which the Council must solve. It would seem that the Council is guilty of not having clearly thought out its policy and the practical implications of that policy. The declaration of the Conservation Area was a major step forward, but little has been done to create major improvements in the district, and it is this lack of direction in planning which the Council needs to rectify.

RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

In order for the area to be conserved, an effort is required by all parties concerned. The Council has suffered from severe financial restrictions and has not put Chapelfields high on its list of priorities, but even so the conservation programme started badly with the demolition of the old doctor's surgery in Mount Street, which had been a good example of a master watchmaker's house.

Nor can the residents of the area be excused. Attempts a few years ago to set up a residents association to discuss the questions of development and housing changes were not very successful. The then chairman, David Ager, says: "there were a number of enthusiastic people but we lacked popular support. With proposed building plans, perhaps it would be a good time to have another go". Leon Philpott, another resident, agrees: "a number of developments have occurred, such as the destruction of the doctor's surgery in Mount Street and replacement by flats, which could have been challenged by an active residents association".

THE FUTURE?

What, then, of the future? Chapelfields is almost unique in Coventry, it is one of the few districts of the city which continue to remind us of our industrial heritage, and it would be a tragedy if this should be lost by the invidious attack of unimaginative modernisation. Bold decisions need to be taken, and money spent, if the district is to become, not just another patch of improved dwellings, but a truly conserved area.

If you are interested in re-forming a Chapelfields residents association to protect and further the interests of the area, please get in touch with E.C.H.O., c/o Earlsdon Library.



Val & John
at the post-office

BROOMFIELD ROAD, EARLSDON
cut flowers

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SHOPPING

EARLSDON STREET POST OFFICE

The Post Office has a new owner. He is Mr. B. Mistry, who has just come from Nuneaton and is now settling in Earlsdon.

We wish him every success.

52 - 54 EARLSDON STREET

The current situation regarding the new development on the former VG site, 52 - 54 Earlsdon Street, which was originally built as a single supermarket but has since been split into two shops, is that the owner has sold one of the units, no. 52, to Entwistle Thorpe, and work has been going on inside. He is also at present negotiating with a prospective tenant for the other unit. A further planning application is now in for alterations and he hopes that final works preparatory to opening will be carried out in the next month or so.

PUB CRAWL

Nº 4. The Albany Hotel, Earlsdon

The Albany, a Marstons house, is very popular with the many students who live in Earlsdon so consequently it is crowded most weekends except in the summer when they go home to their respective 'locals'. An added attraction for young people is a games room on the first floor with pool tables, pinball, dart board and a juke box. Early in the evening the games room is used by youngsters in their early teens as there is no bar in there. The one drawback is that drinks have to be bought downstairs.

The ground floor is split into a small bar and a large lounge. The beers have a reputation of strength and quality, the 'Pedigree' and the 'Burton Bitter' (BB) are excellent. The 'Merry Monk' mild, a good drink, is one of the strongest milds in the country.

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- 1) Where would you find 'Poplar Crescent'?
- 2) The 'Astoria' cinema doesn't show films any more, but you can still see it. Where?
- 3) What is sold at 'Woodbine Cottage' in Earlsdon Street?
- 4) How did Albany Road get its name?
- 5) What is the name of the parish church of Earlsdon?
- 6) Who gave the money to build Earlsdon Library?
- 7) What are the 'three faced liars'?
- 8) Which Earlsdon building frequently has a flag flying from it?
- 9) What was the old name of the 'Chestnut Tree' pub in Craven Street?
- 10) Where would you find an old drinking fountain in Earlsdon?

See if you can find out the answers by looking around Earlsdon, Chapelfields and Hearsall. You may find you need to ask your Mum or Dad, or someone who has lived in the area for a long time. Anyway, we hope you enjoy finding out.

Answers in the next E.C.H.O. - and there will be ten more things for you to find out as well.



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